



Bylaw Review Committee Meeting Minutes

December 15, 2021

Committee Members:

Eric Grund	Chair
Rachel Rivkind	Vice Chair
Thomas Coogan	Member
Joan Kuhn	Member
Fred Freeman	Member

Present: Eric Grund, Rachel Rivkind, Joan Kuhn, Fred Freeman, Town Manager Joe Colangelo, Town Clerk Cathy Harder-Bernier.

Meeting called to order at 7pm by Eric Grund

First Discussion/Bylaw Proposal: Title change from Selectmen to Selectboard (Article 9 in draft)

Eric Grund asked Town Manager Joe Colangelo to report on the discussion with Town Counsel regarding proper wording and sentence syntax changes needed to best propose the change in title from Selectmen to Selectboard and any other pertinent items.

Joe Colangelo: referred the committee to the draft language in Articles 8, 9 and 10 in the Warrant concerning the wording and sentence syntax changes for the title change Selectmen to Selectboard. No objections noted.

Also referred the committee to Article 17, specifically the language “200 dollars plus all costs associated with the clean-up and repairs required for the removal of the unauthorized waste, per occurrence” to be included. No objections noted

Also discussed was the concept of a defined term period with specific dates for elected officials as opposed to the current practice of, once elected, assuming the position immediately. Joe



Colangelo stated that Town Counsel indicated in their meeting, although likely legal he has serious concerns of potential practical negative impacts that could result and therefore advised against pursuing it.

Cathy Harder-Bernier raised a question of who would do the editing of the Town Manager Act, the General Bylaws, and the Zoning Bylaws to reflect the proposed changes and when should it be done?

A brief discussion ensued. Possibly an intern was suggested to edit. Cathy Harder-Bernier stated usually the Town Clerk takes the language approved at Town Meeting and submits to the Attorney General's Office, but completely editing these three entire documents will be quite cumbersome.

Joe Colangelo stated that Town Counsel confirmed that the changes above can be presented on one single page, as has been done in other towns, and the actual documents be edited after.

Cathy Harder-Bernier stated a concern they would have to be edited in time for submission to the Attorney General's Office by June.

Second Bylaw Proposal Discussion: Change in Town Election date (Article 16 in draft)

Cathy Harder-Bernier reported on Article 16. She recalled first identifying the problem years ago when on the Advisory Committee, that the existing Monday Town Meeting and following Saturday Election creates a time crunch.

She stated this has been worsened with all the implications of Covid19 – voting by mail and early voting, etcetera.

T.J. Coogan stated as an election worker, he agrees the time crunch exists and should be changed. Additionally, he made the point, it is possible to begin Town Meeting with one set of Elected Officials and end with a different set of elected officials.

Cathy Harder-Bernier indicated that the Emergency Voting Measures put in place for the pandemic expired today and she is uncertain if all or some of them will continue. She has received a favorable response to these measures and they may end up being adopted permanently.

Fred Freeman asked if there is any known objection to changing the Monday/5-day Saturday format to Monday/12-day Saturday format and if there was any historical reasoning for the 5-day format.



Cathy Harder-Bernier stated, after researching back into the 1940s, she could find no specific reasoning for the 5 day format and knows of no objection to the proposed change.

She concluded by saying, that Town Counsel has stated he has no concerns regarding the proposed change.

Third Discussion/Bylaw Proposal: Mandatory Video Recording of all Town Public Meetings (Article 19 in draft).

Joe Colangelo stated this originated from the Board of Selectmen and there was no objection from Town Counsel. He also stated at this time he is introducing the idea but there is not yet any language drafted for discussion.

This Proposal will be presented in more detail at the next meeting.

Fourth Discussion/Bylaw Proposal: Landscaping Bylaw

Joe Colangelo reported a situation in a town neighborhood where an unkempt property existed, with the owner living elsewhere and being current on their taxes, and a coyote had seemed to establish a den, thereby raising safety concerns amongst nearby residents. Perhaps if the grass and general landscaping was better kept the area wouldn't be as appealing to coyotes. Currently the Town has no mechanism to trim the grass or clean the yard.

T.J. Coogan stated he lives in this neighborhood and the proximity of the coyote was concerning to some residents.

Joe Colangelo further stated this situation seems to have a temporary solution as the owner was contacted and agreed to have a landscaping company address the current yard.

Joan Kuhn asked if the plan was to then back charge the owner or lien on the property. Joe Colangelo stated that makes sense, but he hasn't yet worked through all the details.

Eric Grund asked if this proposal had a sponsor and Joe stated not yet, but it may behoove us to see if there are any similar bylaws in other towns.

Other Business:

Eric Grund then asked if Article 17 was all agreed upon, and the committee indicated we were satisfied with the wording.

Eric Grund asked if anyone had anything else and Cathy Harder-Bernier asked to discuss a possible change to the bylaw relating to dogs. She stated her office is considering a proposed



change from 1 year dog licenses to 1-, 2- and 3-year dog licenses. The 3-year dog license can run parallel to the rabies vaccine requirement and would greatly reduce the work of tracking dog licenses. She also stated she is considering different software that would better be able to accommodate a 1-, 2- and 3-year dog license option. Burlington, MA has this software and system in place. She also advised the committee that if this concept is advanced then the section of the dog bylaw that pertains to late fees for license renewals will likely have to also be adjusted.

Eric Grund asked who would be the official sponsor of this bylaw change and Cathy Harder-Bernier stated it would likely be her and the Animal Control Officer.

Joan Kuhn asked if she anticipated any pushback that a 30-dollar fee could be unaffordable to some.

Racheal Rivkind agreed that having a 1-, 2- or 3-year option would be best because of several factors such as you may be a renter, or the dog may be of advanced age etc.

Joan Kuhn asked if any language pertaining to refunds was considered, perhaps in the event of a dog's death.

Eric Grund asked about the current practice of refund, and if the license fee is prorated in the event of a death. Cathy Harder-Bernier stated currently there is no proration.

Rachael Rivkind asked if license transfer from one dog to another was considered.

Cathy Harder-Bernier thanked the committee for their input and stated she may put this proposal forth this year or next, she is not sure at this time.

Eric Grund asked the Town Manager what exactly is the deadline for all bylaw proposals. Joe Colangelo stated it is in the bylaws somewhere but is after January 25th.

Cathy Harder-Bernier stated the deadline likely aligns with the posting deadline for Town Meeting.

Eric Grund stated he continues to work with Steve Ryerson of the Bylaw Review Committee website improvements.

Eric suggested the next meeting be 7pm on January 19th, all agreed.

Motion to adjourn, seconded and carried.